EPA Answers to Questions Posed by Community Members at the May 20, 2002 Red Star Yeast Meeting

1. Is RSY as clean as it could be? How can BAAQMD/EPA set more stringent standards to ensure this source is as clean as it can be? Is RSY using the best available technology to reduce emissions at the source and at the end of the pipe?
   We have not evaluated all sources of air pollution at Red Star to determine whether or not reductions could be made. The plant's present operation and corresponding air emissions are legally allowed by an operating permit administered by the BAAQMD.

   Regarding your question on how EPA or the District can set more stringent emission standards, EPA regulates stationary sources primarily through two mechanisms: (1) establishing federal regulations that apply to particular industrial sectors (e.g. New Source Performance Standards at 40 C.F.R. Part 60, Maximum Achievable Control Techniques ("MACT") at Part 63) and (2) approving local regulations into the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The SIP contains two kinds of regulations: (1) emissions limitations that apply to particular industrial sectors, which can be more but not less strict than the federal standards; and (2) permitting programs known as "new source review" that establish individual conditions before allowing construction of new stationary sources or significant modifications the owner/operator makes to an existing stationary source. Each of the listed actions includes some form of public participation. EPA promulgates the federal regulations and proposes to approve SIP regulations pursuant to notice and comment rulemaking. The public also has an opportunity to participate in the District's adoption of regulations before they are submitted to EPA for inclusion in the SIP and to comment on proposed new source review permits.

   The Red Star Yeast manufacturing facility is a stationary source that must comply with the federal MACT standard for yeast manufacturing which was established in May 2001. The MACT standard applies to yeast manufacturing facilities across the nation, but because Red Star Yeast was in operation long before the MACT standard's existence, Red Star has until May of 2004 to comply with the emission rates in the MACT.

   The only direct way that EPA can set more strict air pollution standards that would apply to Red Star Yeast is to promulgate a new federal regulation that applies to all yeast manufacturing facilities.

   In 1990, Congress amended the Clean Air Act and added the title 5 permitting

program. **Title 5 requires the BAAQMD to issue an Operating Permit to Red Star Yeast. The Operating Permit does not provide for establishing more stringent emission limits for Red Star Yeast, but serves as a single document in which all of the applicable federal and SIP regulations are listed. In addition, the Operating Permit will list all conditions that have been imposed at Red Star Yeast as a result of the SIP new source review permitting program. EPA has an opportunity to review the Operating Permit before it is finalized to ensure that all applicable requirements are listed. The public also has the opportunity to comment on the Title 5 Operating Permit, and to seek administrative and ultimately judicial review of the agencies' conclusions regarding all applicable requirements.**

Assuming Red Star Yeast is in compliance with the federal regulations and SIP requirements (including any conditions resulting from a new source review permit), Red Star Yeast is as clean as is legally required.

2. Does the source want to be --as clean as it can be?--a good neighbor?-- or is it looking for the legal minimum? If the goal is legal minimum, is that sufficient for the District/EPA, either according to their laws and regulations, or their policies?
EPA cannot speculate about Red Star Yeast's intentions. EPA's statutory mandate under the Clean Air Act is to establish federal regulations and review the District's regulations for inclusion into an approved SIP. Additionally, EPA may enforce both federal and SIP approved regulations against any individual stationary source that is in violation of an applicable requirement. Finally, EPA is ensuring through the Operating Permit program that a community can readily ascertain the exact requirements that apply to a particular stationary source.

3. What are the pollution prevention policies of the District/EPA?
Pollution prevention is an essential component of EPA's overall goal of protecting human health and the environment. Preventing pollution offers important benefits, as pollution never created avoids the need for expensive investments in waste management and cleanup. By anticipating the future, pollution prevention reduces both financial costs (waste management and cleanup) and real environmental costs (health problems and environmental damage). As a result, pollution prevention holds the exciting potential of protecting the environment and strengthening economic growth through more efficient production and natural resource use.

Pollution prevention has been declared the "environmental policy of the United States." Under Section 6602(b) of the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, Congress established a national policy to prioritize environmental management. Pollution prevention was identified as the highest priority. The ranking of environmental management strategies is as follows:

1. Prevention--reduce pollution at the source

2. **Reuse--reuse/recycle when you can not reduce**
3. **Treatment--treat pollution when you can not reduce or reuse/recycle**
4. **Disposal--safely dispose of pollution as a last resort**

For more information on EPA's P2 Policy Statement, Statement of Definition, or Framework for P2, or on the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, visit EPA's national Pollution Prevention Web site at http://www.epa.gov/p2/index.htm.

4. An EPA consultants report (AP-42), notes that there is a scrubber available that can reduce VOC (volatile organic compound) emissions from yeast manufacturing plants. Where is the scrubber being used? Why can't this scrubber technology be used at Red Star?
EPA Region 9 has reviewed the 1995 AP-42 Report (*See* http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/ap42/ch09/). Both the 1995 final report and the 1994 background document to the report indicate that at that time, "only 1 yeast manufacturing facility uses an add-on pollution control system to reduce VOC emissions from the fermentation process." The report further states, "[T]he 1 facility with add-on control uses a wet scrubber followed by a biological filter. Performance data from this unit suggest an emission control efficiency of better than 90 percent." *See* final report at page 9.13.4-5. At this time, EPA Region 9 does not know which facility is using this wet scrubber, how it is being used, and ultimately, whether or not this same type of control would be technologically feasible at Red Star. We have been informed that Fleischmann's Yeast in Oakland used a scrubber to control its yeast drying operations. However, it appears that Red Star does not dry the yeast it manufactures prior to shipment so the technology is not necessarily transferred to Red Star.

5. Could there be a joint inspection/evaluation by the District/state/EPA? Could the community participate?
EPA has authority under Section 114 of the Clean Air Act to inspect Red Star Yeast, and could perform the inspection jointly with the District. It is unlikely EPA could require Red Star Yeast to include community members in an inspection, in part, because only EPA employees who have a certificate demonstrating their knowledge of health and safety procedures are allowed to enter certain areas of manufacturing facilities. Alternatively, we are aware the community has asked the facility managers for a tour, and if such a tour occurs, we would be glad to join it.

6. What is vinyl chloride?
Vinyl chloride is a colorless, flammable gas at normal temperatures with a mild, sweet odor. It is a manufactured substance that is used to make polyvinyl chloride (PVC). PVC is used to make a variety of plastic products, including pipes, wire and cable coatings, and the furniture and automobile upholstery.

Vinyl chloride also results from the breakdown of other substances, such as trichloroethane, trichloroethylene, and tetrachloroethylene. Vinyl chloride is also known as chloroethene, chloroethylene, and ethylene monochloride.

Liquid vinyl chloride evaporates easily into the air. Vinyl chloride, if it is near the surface of soil or water, can also evaporate. Vinyl chloride in the air can break down within a few days to other substances, some of which can be harmful.

For more information contact:

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Division of Toxicology
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Atlanta, GA 30333
Phone: 1-888-422-8737 - FAX: (404)498-0057

7. How can we get EPA to assist us?
EPA will be glad to respond to all questions and requests and will provide documents in response to a request pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. We are following the Title V process for Red Star closely and, by statute and regulation, are also part of the review, appeal and petition process for that permit. We would be glad to join the District forums which the community organizes and would also be glad to make presentations on our permitting, pollution prevention and other programs and policies.

8. What does EPA know about our clean up? And what is EPA's role in this clean up effort?
The EPA has completed preliminary assessment and site investigation activities associated with the AMCO Chemical Site (formerly known as DC Metals) to determine whether this site poses a risk to surrounding residents and whether the site meets the EPA criteria for inclusion on the National Priorities List (NPL) for contaminated sites. EPA expects to hold a public meeting in late July to provide more information. If you have any questions or concerns about the AMCO Chemical site, please write, e-mail or call Wenona Wilson, Community Involvement Coordinator, U.S. EPA Region 9 (SFD-3), 75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105 wilson.wenona@epa.gov or Brunilda Davila, Environmental Engineer, U.S. EPA at (415) 972-3162 davila.brunilda@epa.gov.